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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - CORRECT TAG ADDED: EAID

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: PROPOSED SUPPORT TO JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY  
BOLOGNA CENTER

REF: STATE 174097

1. Embassy Rome strongly supports Johns Hopkins University's request on behalf of the Johns Hopkins University Bologna Center for an FY 2005 ASHA grant of \$100,000 to procure books and journals and to pay the salaries of three professors (reftel). ConGen Florence and Embassy Rome have long had a close relationship with the Bologna Center, since 2003 under the directorship of former US Ambassador Marisa Lino. In addition, a number of our officers at post are graduates of the Center, as are many high-level Italian government officials with whom we have regular contact.

2. Founded in 1955, the SAIS Bologna Center is the only full-time resident American graduate school of international relations in Europe. Since its creation, the Center has been at the cutting edge of international political and economic developments. The Center was among the first institutions of higher learning to bridge the gap between East and West. It established links with Eastern Europe long before the fall of the Berlin Wall through ties with universities in Krakow, Budapest, and Prague. Since its inception, more than 2,640 foreign students have graduated from the Center, from 96 different countries. In addition to drawing some of the best-prepared students from throughout Europe, SAIS Bologna attracts students from all over the world, with an increasing number of students coming from countries in the Middle East, the Far East, Africa, and Latin America. Nearly all of these students require full tuition and stipend fellowships.

3. SAIS is highly regarded in the US, in Italy, and internationally for the quality of its instruction, faculty, and research. As educator to students from all over the world, who in time will assume top-ranking roles in government and business, SAIS Bologna is training a new generation of international leaders. The Bologna Center contributes significantly to the formative training of many of Italy's -- and other countries' -- foreign affairs experts. Over the nearly five decades of the Center's operation, a large number of Italian diplomats, senior civil servants, international business executives, economists, and researchers have received their masters degrees from SAIS. The Center's alumni worldwide include nearly a dozen Foreign Ministers and many Ambassadors.

4. The SAIS Bologna Center is very influential in Bologna, home of Italy's premier university. There is significant sharing of information, programs, and faculty between the Center and SAIS-Washington, and the University of Bologna and the city of Bologna consider SAIS to be an invaluable asset. SAIS Bologna operates 100 percent according to the American system in an environment that is quite different, and it has served to push the University of Bologna, and therefore the Italian university system in general, toward change in teaching methods and faculty-student relations. The Bologna Center's operation retains great influence, particularly since Italian universities tend to be huge and uncaring institutions of mass education from which relatively small numbers of students graduate. Even at the graduate level, the relationship between faculty and student is usually formal, distant, and extremely unequal. SAIS Bologna students and faculty work together more closely and with greater mutual respect.

5. Continued ASHA support is critical in allowing the Bologna Center to maintain its high quality of graduate education to an elite international student body. Without continued US government funding, comparable Italian government funding may be lost, and cutbacks would be inevitable in US resident faculty, non-American student fellowships, and English-language library resources. Embassy Rome strongly urges ASHA to provide all possible funding to this remarkable institution so that it can continue the crucial work it is doing.

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